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**STARK OPPOSES FUNDING BILL: DOES MORE TO PROMOTE WAR THAN ENABLE PEACE**

WASHINGTON – Late last night, U.S. Rep. Pete Stark (D-Fremont) voted against the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2006. It passed the House by a vote of 393-32. Stark's statement follows:

"Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act for FY 2006.

"The United States should be the world's leading peace broker rather than its largest arms dealer. Unfortunately, about one-quarter, or about \$5 billion, of the funding for this foreign operations appropriations bill is direct military aid and more than \$2.5 billion are "Economic Support Funds", which are often used for security operations. Supplying so many weapons to other nations does more to promote war than it does to enable peace.

"To be fair, there are positive provisions in this bill. For example, it increases funding for family planning programs and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Regrettably, this good news is tarnished by another provision in the bill that gives President Bush the power to unilaterally withhold funding from the UNFPA initiative. For several years, President Bush has withheld these funds claiming that UNFPA plays a role in the coercive abortion practices of the Chinese.

"Despite that rhetoric, UNFPA does not provide funding for abortions or abortion services. It works to prevent the need for abortions by educating women in other countries on the many advantages to services such as contraception and disease prevention. UNFPA is the largest internationally funded source of population assistance to developing countries. For over three decades, the UNFPA has provided billions of dollars of assistance to more than 150 countries for voluntary family planning and maternal and child health care.

"I am also disappointed that the bill fails to fund the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). The GEF is the largest single funding source for projects to improve our global environment.

"I also oppose provisions in this bill that have removed all conditionality on U.S. military assistance to Indonesia and Guatemala. Indonesia continues to abuse the human rights of its

people and Guatemala has violated numerous agreements stipulated in its domestic peace accords.

“What message is this Republican Congress sending the world? On the one hand, President Bush sends Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on a tour of the Middle East touting democracy. On the other hand, this Republican Congress is allowing brutal regimes to get military aid without any restrictions.

“I cannot vote for this legislation. The large amount of military aid and the lack of commitment to promoting democracy and international family planning initiatives force me to vote against it.”